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FROM : Amembassy TEL AVIV

DATE: December 24, 1968

SUBJECT : Eban's Remarks on Liberty Claims

REF :

On December 17, Foreign Minister Abba EBAN replied in Knesset interpellation to queries from several Members of the Knesset on the subject of the USS Liberty claims and with regard to allegations that the damage to the US vessel on June 8, 1967, had been due to American negligence. Eban's reply, as reported in the official Knesset minutes, was as follows:

"So far, the Government of Israel has paid the US Government an amount of \$3,323,500 as compensation for the families of men killed on the American Navy ship 'Liberty' in connection with its being mistakenly damaged by the IDF on June 8, 1967. Israel paid the damages within a few months of the receipt of the claim.

"Israel undertook at the time (of the incident) to indemnify the US for the loss of life and property caused by the disaster.

"Israel paid the damages within a few months after the claim was presented in order to spare the bereaved families financial difficulties. The discussion of the further claim, for damage to the ship, was postponed by agreement between the parties until the US Government would have completed the preparation and presentation of all its claims of all kinds.

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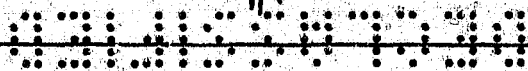
Drafted by:

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